



CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN VIRGINIA SFY 2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)

Child Protective Services- Overview

The purpose of Child Protective Services (CPS) is to identify abused and neglected children; provide services to prevent abuse and neglect and provide families with resources to help them provide safe and healthy care for their children.

The goals of CPS are:

- Respond to reports of suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Assess child safety.
- Support and strengthen families, when possible.
- Assist families with services to help ensure the safety of their children.
- Prevent future abuse or neglect.

Anyone can make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect. Many people make reports because they care about a child's safety. Certain professionals who work with children, like doctors or teachers, are also required to report suspected child abuse and or neglect. They are referred to as mandated reporters.

In Virginia, any child under 18 is considered "abused or neglected" when their parent or caregiver:

- Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury.
- Has a child present with them during the manufacture or sale of certain drugs.
- Fails or refuses to provide them with adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care to prevent risks to the child's health and safety.
- Abandons them or fails to provide adequate supervision for the child's age and level of development.
- Commits or allows to be committed, any sexual act upon them.
- Leaves the child alone with a registered violent sex offender (Tier III) who is not related to them by blood or marriage.

A child can also be considered abused or neglected if they are a victim of human trafficking, which includes sex or labor trafficking. Additionally, health care providers will contact CPS if they determine a newborn has been affected by substance abuse or is experiencing withdrawal symptoms because they were exposed to drugs or alcohol during pregnancy.

When a local department of social services (LDSS) receives a report or complaint of abuse or neglect, the LDSS will determine whether the complaint or report is valid upon receipt of the complaint. Criteria are established for determining whether a complaint or report is valid. Each of the following criterion must be satisfied before a complaint or report can be determined to be valid:

- Allegations involve a child less than 18 years of age
- The alleged abuser is in a caretaking role
- The LDSS has jurisdiction
- The allegations meet the definition of child abuse or neglect.

CPS will respond to valid child abuse or neglect reports by conducting a family assessment or an investigation. The goals of both responses are to assess the child's safety, support the family when possible, and prevent future child abuse or neglect.

A family assessment is conducted when there are no immediate child safety concerns, and the allegations are not required by law to be investigated. At the conclusion of the Family Assessment no disposition is made.

An investigation is conducted when there are immediate child safety concerns, or the report is required by law to be investigated. At the conclusion of the investigation, a disposition of founded or unfounded is made.

An out-of-family investigation is conducted when the abuse or neglect occurs in certain settings by someone who is in a caretaker role but is not related to the child. There are additional requirements when CPS conducts out-of-family investigations. Some examples of out-of-family settings include child day care centers, private and public schools, children's residential facilities, day care providers and foster/adoptive homes.

A Human Trafficking Assessment is required when a report alleges a child is a victim of human trafficking, including sex trafficking or labor trafficking, and does not meet the validity criteria for an investigation or family assessment.

Summary of Data for SFY2025

During State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025, there were **36,761** reports of child abuse or neglect **completed**¹ by Virginia's 120 city and county departments of social services. This does not include **933** in process valid referrals and **193** founded investigations which are pending appeal. There were **53,343** children involved as possible victims in those completed reports. Of these reports, **652** reports involved a substance-exposed infant, and **1,741 completed** reports occurred in an Out-of-Family setting. There were **58** Human Trafficking Assessments conducted.

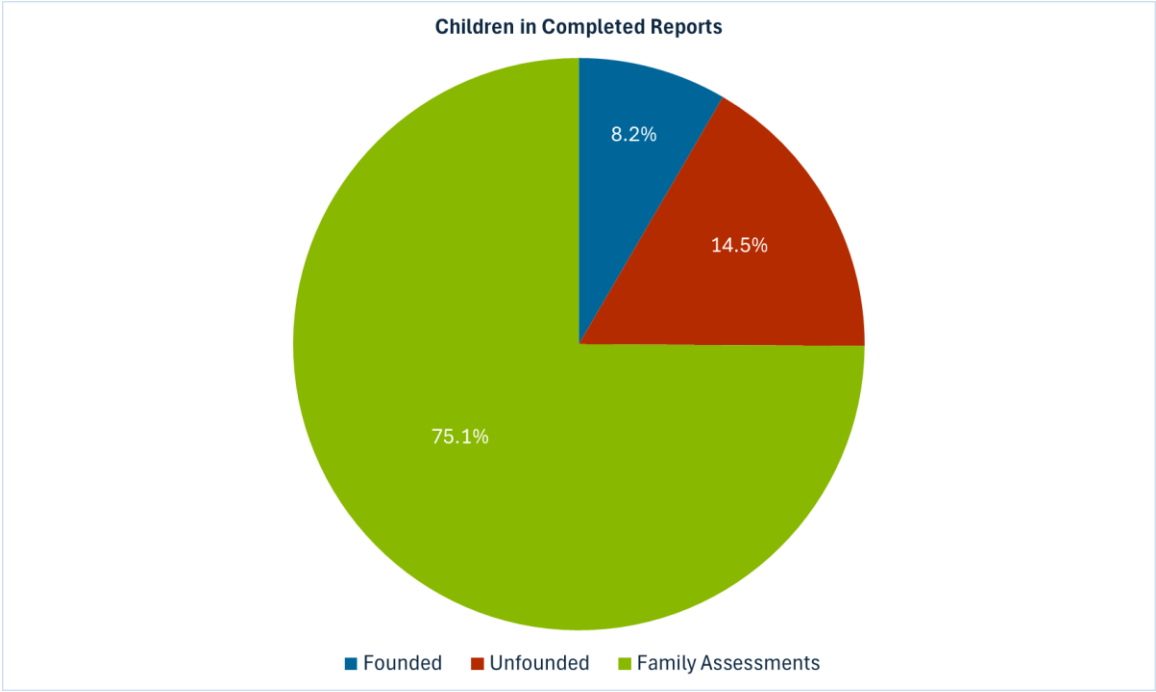
I. Children and Responses by Child Protective Services (CPS)

There were **53,343** children in **36,761 completed** reports. Of those:

- **4,365 (8.2%)** children were involved in **2,808** founded investigations. "Founded" means that a review of the facts gathered during an investigation met the "preponderance of the evidence" standard.
- **7,732 (14.5%)** children were involved in **5,678** unfounded investigations. "Unfounded" means that a review of the facts gathered during an investigation did not meet the "preponderance of the evidence" standard.
- The majority of all children, **41,246 (75.1%)**, were involved in **28,275** valid reports that received a family assessment. A family assessment is an alternative response that includes engaging with the family to assess the strengths and needs of the children and families. There is no determination of "founded" or "unfounded" in a family assessment.

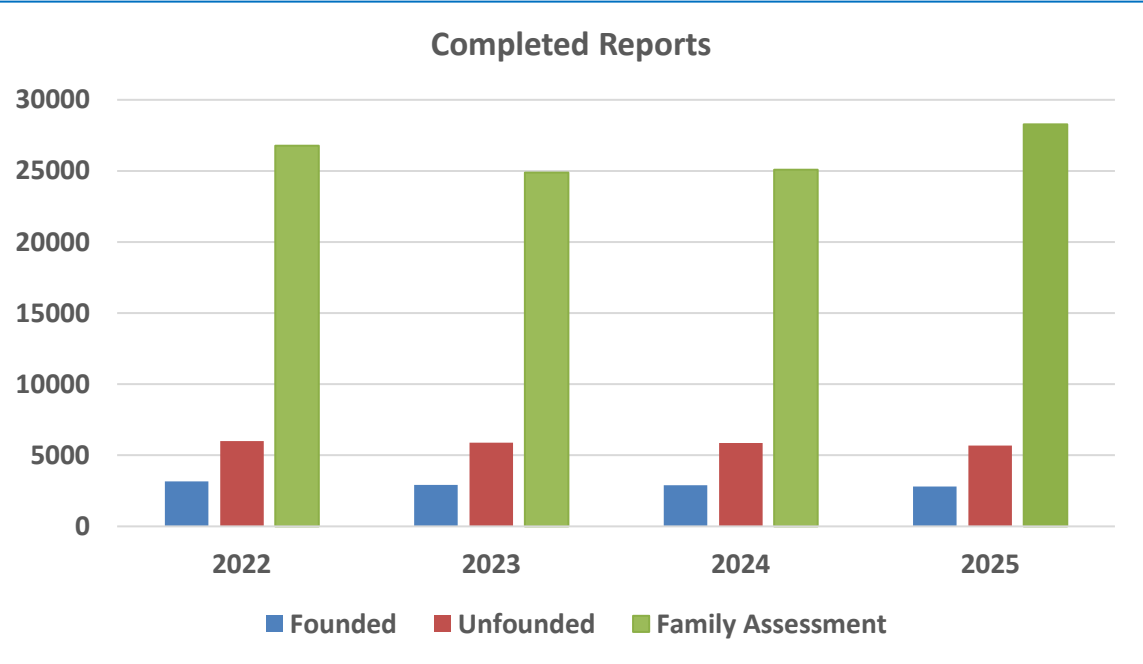
Additionally, there were **104** children involved in **58** Human Trafficking Assessments. The involved children and youth were predominantly female (67%), white (51%) and between 12 and 17 years of age (57%).

¹ "Completed" reports have supervisory approval. Completed does not include "other" or pending" reports.



Completed Reports- SFY 2022 to SFY 2025

Fiscal Year	Founded Investigations	Unfounded Investigations	Family Assessments	Total Completed CPS Reports
2025	2,808	5,678	28,275	36,761
2024	2,905	5,859	25,083	33,847
2023	2,913	5,876	24,890	33,679
2022	3,161	5,991	26,765	35,917



II. Reporters of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

In SFY 2025, there were **102,372** persons who reported suspected child abuse or neglect to local and state departments of social services.

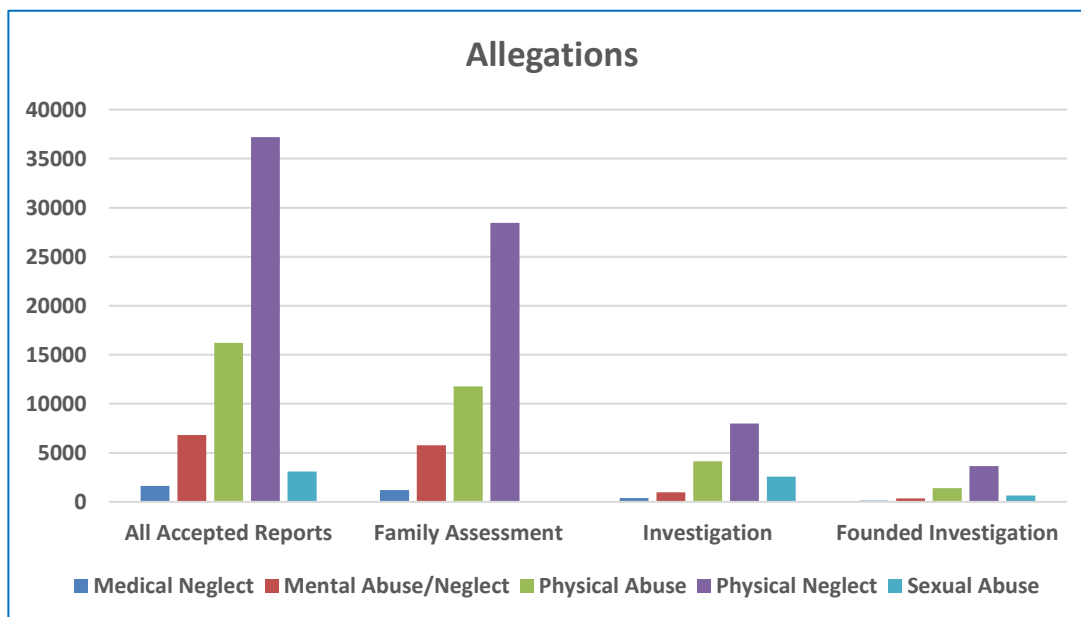
Categories of Reporters- SFY 2022 to SFY 2025

Category	SFY2022	SFY2023	SFY 2024	SFY 2025
Educators	24.3%	25.9%	25.9%	22.8%
Law enforcement/legal/courts	18.6%	17.7%	17.5%	16.6%
Relatives/parents	9.8%	11.0%	10.5%	7.8%
Anonymous	9.9%	10.2%	11.6%	11.6%
Mental Health	11.1%	10.9%	10.6%	9%
Other (includes friends/neighbors)	9.8%	10.5%	10.0%	8.1%
Medical Community	7.2%	6.9%	7.0%	6.5%
Social Services staff	3.8%	3.7%	3.6%	4.6%
Child Care Providers	0.7%	0.7%	.8%	.8%

III. Types of Maltreatment Allegations

Type Of Maltreatment*	All Accepted Reports	Family Assessments	Investigations	Founded Investigations
Medical Neglect	1,620	1,211	375	111
Mental Abuse/Neglect	6,815	5,774	965	367
Physical Abuse	16,216	11,764	4,134	1,391
Physical Neglect	37,203	28,464	7,978	3,665
Sexual Abuse	3,106	0	2,584	628

* Note: In some reports, more than one type of maltreatment may have occurred.

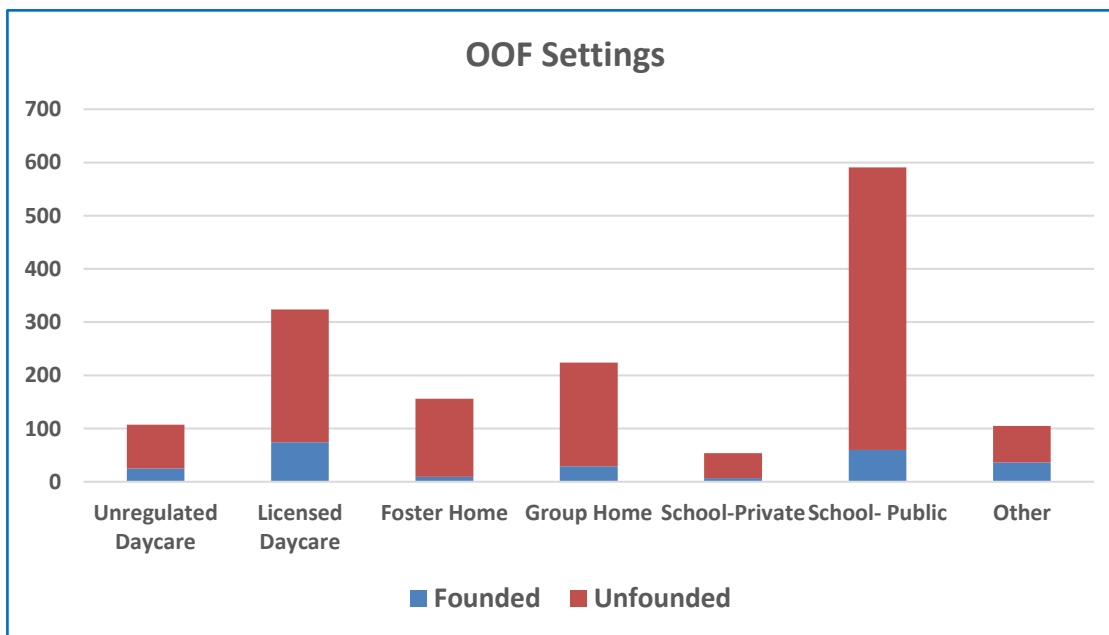


IV. Out of Family (OOF) Reports

In SFY 2025 there were 1,757 Out of Family (OOF) reports of child abuse or neglect completed statewide. An OOF investigation involves a caretaker who is not typically related to the child but who has the care and responsibility for the child in a professional capacity. Some settings are regulated or licensed, others are not. All valid OOF reports are responded to with an investigation.

OOF Setting	Founded	Unfounded	Total*
Unregulated Daycare (includes babysitter; religiously exempt)	25	82	107
Licensed Daycare (includes Homes; centers; voluntary registered)	74	250	324
Foster Home (includes local and state approved)	9	147	156
Group Home/Residential (includes institutional)	29	195	224
School- Private (includes private spec. Ed)	7	47	54
School- Public	60	531	591
Other (includes summer camp; other org.)	32	69	101

*Note: Total does not include any pending reports



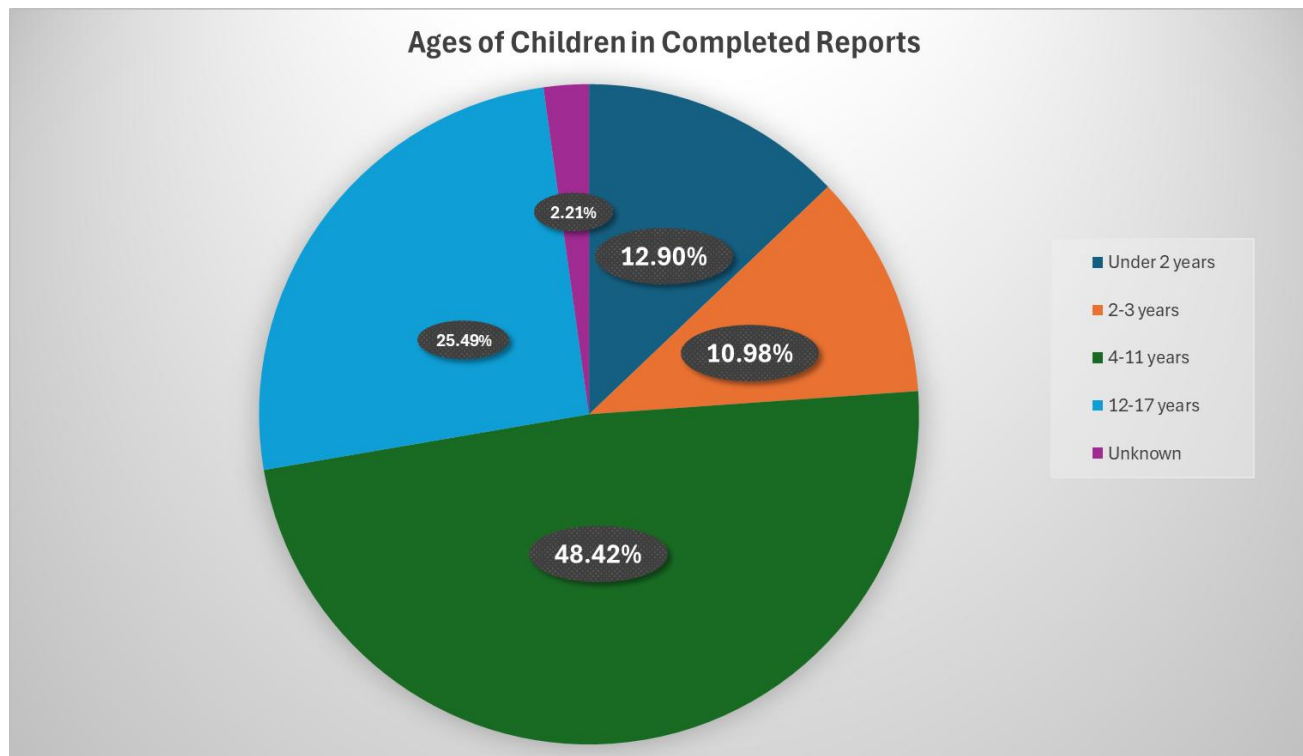
V. Children

Children in Completed Reports SFY2022 to SFY 2025

Fiscal Year	Founded	Unfounded	Family Assessment	Total
2025	4,365	7,732	41,246	53,343
2024	4,474	7,896	39,841	53,440
2023	4,368	8,033	40,079	52,480
2022	4,911	8,179	39,804	52,894

How old were the children in completed reports?

Age	Founded	Unfounded	Family Assessment	Total
Under 2 years	832	842	4,951	6,625
2- 3 years	557	785	4,300	5,642
4- 11 years	1,714	3,514	19,646	24,874
12-17 years	1,063	2,418	9,613	13,094
Unknown	199	172	764	1,135



What was the race of children in investigations/ family assessments/ all completed CPS reports/all children in Virginia?

Race	Children in <u>All Completed CPS Reports</u> (n=53,343)	Children in <u>All Completed Investigations</u> (n=12,097)	Children in <u>All Completed Family Assessments</u> (n=41,246)	Children in <u>Virginia</u> ² (n= ~1,874,030)
White	58%	61%	55.4%	3.2%
Black	26.6%	23%	27%	1.5%

² Source: [United States Census Bureau Quick Facts](#) (estimates)

Asian	1.7%	1.3%	1.8%	.09%
American Indian, Native Hawaiian	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	.009%
Unknown	8.1%	8.3%	7.3%	0.4%
Two or More	8.1%	8.1%	7.4%	0.4%
Declined/Abandoned	1.7%	0.4%	.05%	.06%

What was the race of children in investigations with a *founded* disposition compared to *all* investigations?

Race	Children in <i>Founded</i> Investigations (n=4,365)	Children in All Completed <u>Investigations</u> (n=12,097)	Children in <u>Virginia</u> ³ (n= ~ 1,874,030)
White	60.2%	61%	0.5%
Black	24.4%	23%	0.2%
Asian	0.7%	1.3%	.009%
American Indian, Native Hawaiian	0.2%	0.3%	.003%
Unknown	5.8%	8.3%	.07%
Two or More	8.2%	8.1%	.07%
Declined/Abandoned	0.2%	0.4%	.003%

³ Source: [United States Census Bureau Quick Facts](#) (estimates)

VI. Child Deaths Reported in SFY 2025

- There were **163** valid reports of a suspected child abuse or neglect death that were responded to by a local department of social services. This is a decrease of two reports from SFY2024.
- As of **11/6/2025**, **40** children died from abuse or neglect.
- Fifty-three (53) investigations were pending the final disposition as of **11/6/2025**.

Child Fatalities- SFY 2022 to SFY 2025⁴

Fiscal Year	Founded Fatalities	Unfounded Fatalities	Other (pending or appealed)	Total
2025	40	70	53	163
2024	42*	119*	4*	165
2023	52*	115*	6*	173
2022	56	103	5	164

*updated 11/6/2025

³ Source: [United States Census Bureau Quick Facts](#) (estimates)

⁴ Data collected from local departments of social services as of 11/6/2025.

Child Fatality Investigations

